CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.742
27 June 1996

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND FORTY-SECOND PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 27 June 1996, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Urrutia (Peru)

GE.96-62517 (E)

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I declare open the 742nd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

On the list of speakers for today are the distinguished representatives of France, Viet Nam, Nigeria and Mexico. Once we have come to the end of the list of speakers I intend to submit to the Conference for a decision the request submitted by Singapore to participate in our work. I now call on the distinguished representative of France, Ambassador Bourgois.

Mrs. BOURGOIS (France) (translated from French): Mr. President, first of all allow me to congratulate you on taking over the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament at a decisive moment. We will need your experience and talents as we conclude negotiations which were embarked on in 1993. Your predecessor, to whom I pay tribute, guided our Conference with great skill which made it possible to take the historic decision to proceed at last to expand its membership. Maybe one success will lead us to another.

France's commitment to these negotiations is well known. The comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty will make it possible to achieve significant progress towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. It must prohibit absolutely and for ever all nuclear weapon test explosions or any other nuclear explosion. It must provide States parties with a guarantee against any attempt to breach their undertakings, thanks to an effective verification system. It must aim to achieve universality. It must enter into force as soon as possible so that this venture cannot be considered as an illusion at the very moment when we complete it, nor, later on, as a lost opportunity.

Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are two indissociable goals. The preamble of the treaty should reflect in a balanced way the equal importance which we attach to these two issues. Let us make no mistake about this: the cessation of testing will put an end to the nuclear arms race. It will make the development of new sophisticated types of nuclear weapons impossible. The signature of the treaty and its ratification by a very large number of States will help to strengthen the international non-proliferation regime. Peace and security in the world will emerge strengthened from this twofold undertaking.

To achieve its aim the treaty must include an international regime to verify commitments which have been undertaken. On-site inspection is at the heart of this system. It constitutes the last resort and the ultimate guarantee. Quite certainly it must be a rare occurrence. Rare not because its triggering and implementation will be hampered, but because its very effectiveness will discourage potential cheats. That is the reason why States parties must not be prevented from using information obtained by national technical means. Information which may in some cases make up for possible limitations in the international monitoring system, in others underpin the data obtained through that system. If we want to be certain of compliance with the zero option, these means are necessary.

Finally, the nuclear-test-ban treaty must be universal and must enter into force as soon as possible. From the outset France has been in favour of

(Mrs. Bourgois, France)

a clause for entry into force including the member States of the Conference after expansion. France feels it necessary that all States with military nuclear capabilities subscribe to this treaty. But it has not forgotten the possibility that one of these States might not join the club and might indefinitely delay the date when the treaty takes effect. If that were to occur, the hopes of the international community would in the final analysis be dashed. This problem of entry into force has not been resolved. We are determined to find an acceptable solution.

Last Monday, Ambassador Ramaker tabled the final version of his draft treaty. On 11 June the President of the French Republic had already welcomed the first initiative taken by the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee. On 24 June I for my part congratulated the Ambassador of the Netherlands on the tabling of a revised text which constitutes the final attempt to reach consensus. I have said on many occasions that France would consider this treaty in the light of its national interests, but that it would also be guided by a resolve to achieve a result. It is in this spirit of compromise that we have painstakingly studied the proposal submitted by Ambassador Ramaker. Regarding the substance, we have to note that this draft is not perfect; that the emphasis in the preamble is placed more on nuclear disarmament than on non-proliferation; that it is difficult for us, for example, to "recognize" that this treaty will put an end to the improvement of nuclear weapons when we are not too certain exactly what this expression means; that the on-site inspection regime is difficult to trigger and to pursue; that the balance between the legitimate protection of national security interests and the need for a certain level of intrusiveness, which we are no more keen on than others, but which is a guarantee of the commitment we have undertaken, has now been modified. I could go on at length, as all the delegations present here could, but it is too late for that now. The time has come for us to reach agreement so that the treaty can be signed at the next United Nations General Assembly. So I have the honour to announce in this forum that France is prepared to adopt as it stands the draft treaty proposed by the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on the CTBT in the form of working papers CD/NTB/WP.330 and 335, on the understanding that some adjustments are still necessary and that the formula for entry into force has to be adapted, as our recent debates have shown.

Let us for a moment look ahead to autumn 1996. Let us imagine the worst-case scenario - no treaty. What would happen if we were to demonstrate our inability to arrive at an agreement? The least that could happen would be that we would be criticized for a lack of responsibility. Worse still, only unilateral moratoriums, which by definition are more fragile than an international agreement, would then bind the nuclear Powers to a cessation of testing. The nuclear arms race might be resumed. New States would be tempted to acquire the power of nuclear weapons, without necessarily having proper control. What would happen to the commitments entered into by almost all of us in the 1995 declaration on principles and objectives in the field of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament? What would happen to the programme subscribed to in that declaration, if we had not even been able to take an essential step in that programme? Peace, the security of the world would not have been improved. As it stands, the draft which has been submitted to us is certainly not the treaty which we would like to have seen, each of us here for

(Mrs. Bourgois, France)

different reasons, but it is the treaty that we can have now. The commitment entered into by my country here will surprise no one. It is fully in line with France's approach. It is further evidence of our active contribution to the efforts undertaken by the international community to promote nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the distinguished representative of France for her statement and the kind words she addressed to the Chair. The distinguished representative of Viet Nam, Ambassador Le Luong Minh, has the floor.

Mr. LE LUONG MINH (Viet Nam): Mr. President, first, allow me, on behalf of the Vietnamese delegation, to extend to you my most heartfelt congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I am convinced that with your experience and diplomatic skills, you will lead the Conference to great breakthroughs in the ongoing negotiations at this very important juncture. In discharging your important task, you can rest assured of my delegation's cooperation.

Speaking for the first time for Viet Nam as a full member of the Conference on Disarmament, I would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation of the efforts undertaken by His Excellency Ambassador Munir Akram of Pakistan and other previous Presidents and the coordinators of the different groups as well as the flexible attitudes of member delegations that contributed to the adoption of decision CD/1406 last week. With the adoption of this decision, an important part of the long-standing issue of expansion of the membership of the Conference has been resolved. It is the opinion of my delegation that the Conference should continue to consider this issue in an active manner so that all countries wishing to do so will soon be able to join the Conference.

As a peace-loving country, Viet Nam has always strongly supported and actively participated in international disarmament efforts, especially those aimed at eliminating all weapons of mass destruction, be they nuclear, biological or chemical, etc. Viet Nam is party to major multilateral disarmament treaties. It was among the early signatories of the Chemical Weapons Convention. As a South-East Asian country and member of ASEAN, it has actively joined the common efforts by ASEAN leading to the conclusion of the Treaty on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South-East Asia. With our limited ability in terms of personnel and expertise, we look forward to contributing our part to the current negotiations on a nuclear test ban. It should be noted in this connection that both the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference and the fiftieth session of the United Nations General Assembly have set 1996 as the deadline for the finalization of the text of the CTBT. We hope that intensified efforts will be made by the Conference during the few remaining weeks to achieve this goal. The conclusion of a nuclear test ban will be an important contribution to the non-proliferation regime. However, we must emphasize at this point that non-proliferation is not our final objective. We completely share the view already expressed by many delegations and by His Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, in his important statement before the Conference two days ago, that the treaty must also serve as a

(Mr. Le Luong Minh, Viet Nam)

basis for the pursuit of the objective of eliminating all nuclear weapons. Proceeding from this fundamental position, we associate ourselves with the proposal advanced by the Group of 21 for the establishment of an ad hoc committee on the item "Nuclear disarmament" after the Conference has completed work on the CTBT.

Viet Nam's desire to contribute to the work of the Conference dates back to the early 1980s, when it became a candidate soon after a decision of principle on expansion of the membership of the Conference was adopted. Representing Viet Nam as a new member of the Conference, with the apprehension of its full sovereign rights and its obligations, keeping in mind the goals of our foreign policy for peace, international cooperation and friendship with all countries, we look forward to cooperating with all other delegations in discharging the Conference's mandate, thus meeting the earnest desire of mankind for a world without wars, without weapons of mass destruction, and a world in which peace, friendship and cooperation will prevail.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the distinguished representative of Viet Nam for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. The distinguished representative of Nigeria, Ambassador Abuah, now has the floor.

Mr. ABUAH (Nigeria): Mr. President, I wish to congratulate you as you assume the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. It is our hope that your presidency can contribute to bringing the negotiations for a comprehensive test-ban treaty to a happy ending. Let me commend Ambassador Akram of Pakistan for the able manner in which he conducted the affairs of the Conference during his presidency.

The Conference is now at a critical juncture. After 30 months of negotiations, the Conference is expected, in the next 24 hours, to draw the curtain on the negotiation for a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. The negotiations have been long and arduous. Nerves have frayed and, in many negotiating sessions, some tension was unavoidable. The Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, Ambassador Jaap Ramaker, has worked tirelessly to produce a text which, in his judgement, represents a fair compromise.

Like his predecessors as Chairmen of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban, namely Ambassador Miguel Marín Bosch of Mexico and Ambassador Ludwik Dembinski of Poland, we appreciate his effort. All of them and their many Friends and moderators contributed to the quest to fulfil the mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee. That mandate was to negotiate a "universal and multilaterally and effectively verifiable comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, which would contribute effectively to the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects, to the process of nuclear disarmament and therefore to the enhancement of international peace and security".

Despite the long negotiations and the best efforts of many delegations, it is difficult to agree that the draft contained in working paper CD/NTB/WP.330 and the amendments in working paper CD/NTB/WP.335 before us are designed to achieve a nuclear test-ban treaty. The draft treaty is limited in

scope, as it does not cover a nuclear test ban. Similarly, it does not contribute effectively to nuclear non-proliferation and to the process of nuclear disarmament.

Yet we had expected that the section on the preamble would be strong on both nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in all its aspects. This is not the case, as efforts to include the preamble the shared objective of many non-nuclear-weapon States for a phased programme of nuclear disarmament within a time-bound framework has been fiercely resisted. But this resistance defeats the objective enunciated in the NPT Review and Extension Conference of one year ago in which "nuclear-weapon States [reaffirmed] their commitment ... to pursue in good faith negotiations on effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament".

States parties to the CTBT will have to make financial commitments not undertaken in any other treaty. This is despite the fact that most of them have never acquired nuclear weapons and do not intend to do so. This is why we feel that the financial obligations imposed by the treaty's monitoring system should be balanced with provisions in the preamble that are strong on both nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Many of us will be paying for detecting the future tests of others without assurances that there will not be qualitative improvement in the weapon systems that exist today.

As regards the provision on entry into force, we have long advocated a simple numerical formula based on the membership of the Conference on Disarmament. We still believe, like many others, that this is the way forward for early entry into force. Failure to achieve early effectiveness of the treaty might damage the treaty, with negative consequences for any other nuclear-related treaties that may be negotiated.

We are still concerned about the composition of the Executive Council. We had stated in March 1996, and repeated our position many times since then, that Africa's representation in the Executive Council should reflect the number of States in that region. In addition, we had objected to the creation of a sixth region, which is a departure from the existing practice of five United Nations-recognized regions. While we recognize that all regions have peculiarities, these concerns could be accommodated in a non-discriminatory manner, without violating the established United Nations practice.

No doubt, this nuclear weapon explosion limitation treaty is important. It represents the first post-cold-war nuclear-related treaty to be concluded by the Conference. As such, it portends what we could expect in the realm of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament in the near future. But there is still much ground to cover. Indeed, we have barely started the journey towards the elimination of nuclear weapons, a worthy and cherished goal of the international community. What should succeed the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban should be an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament, with an appropriate negotiating mandate. The objective is to negotiate a convention for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the distinguished representative of Nigeria for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. The distinguished representative of Mexico, Ambassador de Icaza, has the floor.

Mr. de ICAZA (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, it is a particular pleasure for my delegation to see you presiding over our work. We are familiar with your professionalism, we greatly appreciate your personal qualities and you may count on our resolute cooperation in your difficult and important task. It is only right to express our gratitude to the representative of Pakistan for the skill with which he chaired the Conference in the last four particularly critical weeks and for the important decisions to which he guided us.

We are 24 hours away from the deadline that we set ourselves for concluding the negotiations on a universal, international and effectively verifiable treaty for the comprehensive prohibition of nuclear tests, and we cannot conceal the deep concern that major differences still remain with regard to fundamental elements of the treaty, such as its purposes and objectives, the decision-making mechanisms for the verification system and entry into force. The Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee and his delegation have made commendable efforts, which we greatly appreciate and value, to present us with a text that should facilitate agreement with the necessary adjustments following the vital political decisions.

Time is pressing and we are beginning to doubt that those political decisions will be taken in time. That would be serious, very serious, because we run the risk of dashing the hopes that the international community has placed in this negotiating forum. If in this time of détente we do not even manage to prohibit just the testing of weapons through nuclear explosions, then what hopes can there be of our reaching agreement on concrete measures for nuclear disarmament and one day attaining the objective of a world free of nuclear weapons? What hopes of curbing and reversing the nuclear arms race and banishing forever the nightmare of the possible annihilation of mankind? What hopes, if judging by what we have seen we do not even manage to reach an agreement that does not involve the dismantling of a single warhead, nor any change in the strategic plans and programmes of any nation? Here we are, then, stuck in a quagmire because we cannot set forth the aim of putting a stop once and for all to the development and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons. In a quagmire because there is no agreement even on endorsing the undertakings that we entered into barely a year ago in the Review and Extension Conference on the Non-Proliferation Treaty concerning a programme of action to reduce nuclear weapons at the world level with the ultimate objective of eliminating them. In a quagmire because we cannot find a balance between the need for credible monitoring mechanisms that will inhibit the temptation to violate the nuclear test ban and the legitimate desire to avoid unnecessary intrusion. In a quagmire, finally, because of the determination of some delegations to demand requirements for entry into force that are not realistic and would delay it unduly, if not make it impossible.

It is time to reflect and recall what the international community expects of us. We have to conclude, in the next 24 hours, a treaty that will place a

curb on the qualitative development of nuclear weapons, an effective measure for non-proliferation and a major step in a phased programme to bring about the total elimination of nuclear weapons. A treaty that is effectively verifiable and has at least some chance of entering into force in a reasonable time-frame. It is time to cooperate and it is time for flexibility. The time has come to adopt a worthwhile treaty that will be in keeping with our mandate and the trust that has been placed in us.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the distinguished representative of Mexico for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. The distinguished representative of Cuba, Ambassador Caballero, has the floor.

Mr. CABALLERO (Cuba) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, as a son of Latin America and a member of the Group of 21, we are happy to see you presiding over our Conference at such a crucial time. We are convinced that all your diplomatic skill will be brought to bear to achieve what we are all hoping for at this stage - to end our negotiating process and, within 24 hours, say to the world that we have managed to agree on a negotiated text. We also would like to express our satisfaction at the way in which our friend Ambassador Akram of Pakistan presided over the work of the Conference during the last four weeks. We had the pleasure, as coordinator of the Group of 21, of working with him over that period and seeing him display that subtle diplomacy, that skill, that spirit of understanding which characterizes him, enabling him to pave the way for difficult decisions we took during his term of office.

As we have already said, Cuba is amongst those countries that wished to close this session of our Conference with a treaty as we all wish. From the beginning, our country expounded before the Conference how much Cuba hoped that this would be a treaty placing a complete ban on nuclear tests. From the beginning we said how much we felt that this exercise was tied up with the aspiration of mankind as a whole, the disappearance of nuclear weapons from the face of the Earth. Truly, at this point in time we are worried, both in the informal process of negotiations and here in the Conference. There is talk of a spirit of compromise, there is talk of flexibility; we have witnessed all the efforts that the Chairman of the Committee, Ambassador Ramaker, has been making in order to narrow the differences that still separate us on various aspects addressed by the treaty, and unfortunately, just today, we have heard in this room, 24 hours before our Conference concludes, the prevailing concerns.

We have many worries, we have voiced them all in the negotiating process that Ambassador Ramaker has been carrying out together with a large number of delegations who are most directly concerned. We will have an opportunity to refer to them in detail, but we would just like to illustrate our worries with an example. There is a subject that should not be a controversial issue in the negotiating process on the treaty. It is an important subject, it is a subject that has the support of the entire international community. We are referring to the relationship between the prohibition of nuclear testing and the environment. On this issue the United Nations General Assembly at its last session adopted resolution 50/70 M which received the majority support,

(Mr. Caballero, Cuba)

the overwhelming support of the international community, more than 150 votes in favour. This is a subject that was brought before the General Assembly by my country, but which became the non-aligned issue and which received the backing of practically the entire international community.

Obviously, we are aware of the relationship that exists between the General Assembly and our forum of the Conference on Disarmament; nevertheless, we think that everything that is approved there with such a level of support interprets the feelings of the international community. The resolution said, in its preambular part, in one of the paragraphs, "mindful of the detrimental environmental effects of the use of nuclear weapons"; in another paragraph it went on to say "conscious of the positive potential implications for the environment of a future comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty"; then this same resolution, in the operative part, paragraph 1, said "invites the Conference on Disarmament to take every necessary measure to include in negotiating treaties and agreements on disarmament and arms limitation the corresponding environmental norms, with a view to ensuring that the process of implementation of such treaties and agreements is environmentally sound, in particular the destruction of weapons covered by them". In another operative paragraph, the resolution said, "calls upon the Conference on Disarmament to conclude, as a task of the highest priority, a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty as soon as possible in 1996".

We must make it clear that during our negotiating process, some countries upheld national interests, note was taken of them and attempts were made to accommodate these national interests. Our demand is not exactly a national interest on the part of Cuba. Of course, the subject of the environment enjoys the highest priority in my country. To that end, a ministry dedicated to the conservation and care of the environment has been created. Consequently, our demand takes up a demand of the international community. We know about all the efforts that are being made. We are greatly indebted to the Chairman of our Committee for the CTBT for the last-ditch efforts he is making so that our treaty contains a reference to the relationship between the banning of nuclear testing and the environment. We are optimistic. We know that only a few hours are left, but we trust that with the support that we are being given by the Chairman of the Committee, and the efforts of some ambassadors, we will manage to find a compromise on a subject that not only received the overwhelming backing of the international community at the General Assembly, but also in this very room.

I think it would be really highly regrettable if afterwards we had to answer to the international community and explain why our treaty was not able to accommodate a subject to which they attached so much importance. I do not know what facts we could cite to explain to the international ecological movement that we were unable to mention in the treaty the relationship between the halting of nuclear tests and the environment. As we are optimists, we are convinced that it will not be necessary to give an explanation to the international community and to all those in the world who are concerned for the environment. We say this because we still trust that there is a possibility that our treaty will have a specific reference to this relationship.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the distinguished Ambassador of Cuba for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I call on the distinguished representative of Pakistan, Ambassador Akram.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): I have asked for the floor to make a short statement, just for the record. I would like to refer to the letter addressed to the President of the Conference, contained in document CD/1407 of 17 June 1996. I would like to clarify Pakistan's position on the contents of this letter. The contents of this letter are the undertakings of those States which have signed it. They do not reflect the position of my country, nor can we associate ourselves in any manner with its contents. Pakistan cannot accept any linkage, implied or explicit, between certain specific provisions of the United Nations Charter, such as the scope of application of Chapter VII, and membership by States of international bodies, which is their inalienable and sovereign right. We cannot agree to any provision which seeks to compromise the principle of sovereign equality of States. I wish to state, for the record, that no unilateral declaration or commitment by any member State of this Conference, made either individually or collectively, can change or erode the rules of procedure of the Conference on Disarmament, especially the basis on which it adopts its decisions.

Mr. ZAHRAN (Egypt): I did not intend to ask for the floor today, but as we were expecting the end of the negotiations on the CTBT by the end of the second part of the CD session, I thought that before the end of this part, and under your able presidency, Sir, I would have to speak to congratulate you on your accession to the presidency of the Conference. I wish you well and I assure you of my full cooperation, and it happens that, under your presidency, I am assuming the coordinatorship of the Group of 21. So, it is a pleasure to work with you, Sir. In the meantime, I wanted to express my thanks and gratitude to your predecessor, Ambassador Munir Akram, for all the efforts he has devoted to the conduct of the Conference on Disarmament in the best manner.

During well over 30 years, efforts have been under way to achieve a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. At times it appeared that progress was within reach; at others, political realities made any kind of meaningful negotiations impossible. Three years ago, with conditions apparently ripe, the Conference on Disarmament agreed, by consensus, to set up an Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban, which was given a mandate "to negotiate intensively a universal and multilaterally and effectively verifiable comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, which would contribute effectively to the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects, to the process of nuclear disarmament and therefore to the enhancement of international peace and security".

Today, we see that the results of the intensive consultations which have taken place here at the Conference on Disarmament fall short of Egypt's expectations. Still, we continue negotiating in good faith, having in mind that these expectations would be reflected in the text of the treaty.

(Mr. Zahran, Egypt)

To Egypt, a true CTBT is a treaty which bans all nuclear-weapon tests in all environments and for all time, thus contributing to both nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. It is also a treaty which must constitute an important step in an overall process which must lead to the total elimination of all nuclear weapons.

To our regret, the deliberations we have recently had in the Ad Hoc Committee have clearly shown that the objectives mentioned above are not shared by all. These deliberations have shown that while a large number of countries favour a truly comprehensive test-ban treaty, there are some which do not wish to ban all testing or to commit themselves to ending the qualitative improvement and further development of their nuclear arsenals.

The treaty text which we have before us does not adequately reflect the major concerns voiced by Egypt as far as several of the major substantive issues of our negotiations are concerned. I do not wish, at this stage, to refer to all our concerns and our apprehensions, or to matters of detail in the treaty text, on which we hope that negotiations would be concluded by tomorrow at the latest. This needs a miracle but, simply, I wanted to point out some of the issues of concern.

First, the preamble in documents CD/NTB/WP.330 and CD/NTB/WP.335 does not contain a clear commitment to the aim of achieving complete nuclear disarmament in the process which we agreed to in the NPT Conference last year. We firmly believe that such a commitment would have enriched the text by identifying the treaty as one important step towards the ultimate goal of nuclear disarmament.

With respect to the scope of the treaty, we do not consider it reflects the requirements of comprehensiveness. While the scope language may be comprehensive in terms of the environment and in terms of all times, it is not comprehensive in terms of nuclear testing since it only bans explosive tests. To Egypt, a comprehensive test-ban treaty is one which bans all nuclear-weapon tests, whether explosive or otherwise.

On the important matter of on-site inspections, Egypt held the view that these should, once requested by a State party, proceed in the smoothest possible manner and only be halted if it is demonstrated that the request is baseless. Appropriate sanctions should be agreed to in cases of clearly frivolous or harassing requests. These have been reflected, indeed, in the new working paper of the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, CD/NTB/WP.335. The "green light" approach adopted in the draft treaty working paper CD/NTB/WP.330 does not reflect Egypt's preferred position.

The issue of the use of national technical means (NTMs) is also a matter of preoccupation. While we agree that such means should have their place in the treaty and can be useful as a complement to the international monitoring system (IMS), we also consider that, given the fact that not all States have such means at their disposal, the potential for abuse or selectivity and partial use is present. This is why we think that NTMs can be used, only if screened by the IMS.

(Mr. Zahran, Egypt)

The entry-into-force formula should be in line with a simple numerical formula which should include all nuclear-capable States. Any formula to this end is acceptable to my delegation. The formula included in working paper CD/NTB/WP.330 is acceptable, but we will try our best to see to it that the concerns of some delegations are reflected also in that formula. But any formula should include, to our understanding, all nuclear-capable States, otherwise this treaty will lose credibility and will not be comprehensive.

Egypt regrets that the Executive Council composition, as reflected in the text of the Chairman, does not treat Africa in an equitable or balanced manner. On numerous occasions during our deliberations, Egypt has expressed concern over the limited number of seats attributed to Africa, which is, as compared to other groups, significantly underrepresented. These concerns have been ignored, as have those concerning the unprecedented regional grouping system which has found its way into the text proposed by the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee. We cannot accept the system of three regional groups. Asia was always one group, and in the Working Paper of the Chairman, it is divided. I think we have to follow the same grouping as in the United Nations, as we have said before.

These are some of our remarks and concerns at this stage, and we hope that, working together in a spirit of cooperation and dialogue with our colleagues from all the groups, we will be able to redress the provisions of the draft treaty to make them acceptable to all.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the distinguished representative of Egypt for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. I call on the distinguished representative of the United States of America, Ambassador Ledogar.

Mr. LEDOGAR (United States of America): Our congratulations to you, Mr. President, and a pledge of full support from my delegation. The United States reaffirms that the declaration by the Group of 23, later published in CD/1407, and the commitments contained therein, is considered by the United States as being connected integrally and indivisibly to the Conference on Disarmament's consensus approval of CD/1406 on its expansion.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank Ambassador Ledogar for his statement. Would any other delegation like to take the floor? Apparently not.

I would now like to turn to the request made by Singapore to participate as a non-member in the work of the Conference. In the consultations held it has emerged that it would be acceptable for delegations to deal with this request directly in plenary without holding any informal meeting, on the understanding that this does not create a precedent for the future with regard to similar requests that may arise. The request has been distributed to all delegations in document CD/WP.475, which you all have before you. If there are no objections, I shall take it that the Conference agrees to this request.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): The secretariat has distributed, at my request, a very tentative timetable of meetings for the first week of the third part of the session. It is merely indicative and subject to change if necessary. On that understanding, may I take it that this very tentative timetable is acceptable?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): As there is no other business, I shall now adjourn the meeting. The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Thursday, 1 August at 10 a.m., and we hope that it will be held in the Council Chamber, which will very probably have been remodelled.

The meeting rose at 12 noon.